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AUGUSTINE THE MAN

AUGUSTINE THE MAN

BY

AMÉLIE RIVES

(PRINCESS TROUBETZKOY)

WITH A FRONTISPIECE
FROM A DRAWING BY THE
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TO PIERRE

AUGUSTINE THE MAN

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

- AUGUSTINE . *Afterwards Saint Augustine.*
MONICA . *His mother.*
ANTONIUS . *A Christian, and friend of Augustine.*
ALYPIUS . *A friend and fellow-student of Augustine, afterwards baptized with him.*
MELCARA . *A young Carthaginian woman, the mistress of Augustine from his early youth.*
ADEODATUS . *The son of Augustine and Melcara.*
A SERVANT .

The scene is laid in Carthage, in Milan, on Lago Maggiore, and last at Tagaste, in Southern Numidia, Augustine's birthplace.

I

AUGUSTINE IN CARTHAGE

AUGUSTINE THE MAN

I

AUGUSTINE IN CARTHAGE

SCENE.—*A large room with three great windows and a doorway opening on a garden overhanging the sea. From without comes the sound of a woman's laughter mingling with a child's.*

AUGUSTINE *enters with a roll of parchment in his hands and the crown of gilded leaves, given him for his poem by the Proconsul Vindicianus, upon his head.*

AUGUSTINE. At least I here can be the man I feel,
Not seem the man I should be—Emptiness . . .
Emptiness . . . emptiness . . . Could I inhale
The heaven with all its stars, methinks in truth

I still would seem as void unto myself
As were the air without them. Crowned, my
masters!

Crowned for a poem so called . . . A show of words,
A shadow cast by shadows, ghost of a ghost,—
The right apt miming of some other mimes
Who in their turn have mimicked real poets.
No whit, shred, gleanings of myself in it,
—Not even mine own peculiar emptiness,—
Therefore no poem: yet please you, they have
crowned me.

. . . Oh! give me something real, though it be sin!

*[He tosses the parchment on a table and
goes to the window. Leaning out he
calls to the two in the garden.]*

Melcara! Ho! my Sun-bird! Come to me,
And bring thy nestling with thee. Ah, that was real,
That cry of hers, as any springtime bird's
Answering its mate. And real that loveliest hair
Blowing before her as it fain would reach me
Ere her sweet self. The little brave one too—
How fast he runs. Keep up, lad! Cheerly, lad!

I'm watching thee. A race! A race! A race!

[MELCARA *rushes in breathless on the last word, followed closely by ADEODATUS, who has been driving her with a long garland of strung pomegranate flowers. She flings herself on AUGUSTINE'S breast, and the child tries to climb into his father's arms also.*

Why, there, my Sun-bird! there, my Honey-bird!
There—there! Calmly! I've news for ye—great news.

To-day I have been crowned the King of Carthage.

ADEODATUS. Then mother is a queen, and I'm a prince!

Oh! it is like the stories mother tells me.

I like to be a prince. Is that thy crown?

MELCARA. Nay, sweetest, not so fast, and not so free.

Thou must not be so free, dear, with thy father.

ADEODATUS. He likes it . . . Dost thou not?

AUGUSTINE. Like it, Magician?

Who would not be ensorcelled with such wiles?

MELCARA. I know I live in sin, if to love thee
Be sin, dear lord : but oh ! my heart is true
As any wife's.

AUGUSTINE. Pure gold to match this hair.
Ne'er was saint haloed like my sweetest sinner.

MELCARA. Alas ! thou dost but love my hair,
my eyes,—
The way I move, the lips that sting thy blood.
I am all these, yet more than all of these,
Even as the song's the bird yet far, far more.
Thou lovest not me, but that which houses me—
This garment which I wear, of flesh and youth.

AUGUSTINE. My Sun-bird . . .

MELCARA. Nay, we women know, dear lord.
We sit within our bodies shivering
While love shines hot without and doth not reach us.

AUGUSTINE. Why, what is this, thou wilful
woman thing !

Thou hast been thinking !

MELCARA. Oh ! thou may'st mock at me !
But there's a wisdom born of ignorance
Not all your schools of rhetoric can teach.

Such wisdom hath a woman when she loves
With real love, setting herself aside.
For then she seeth clear, not what she longs for,
But what must be. Ay, though she lacks the
learning
To comprehend the poems her lover writes,
She lacks not wit to comprehend the lack
Of love in him that would not read them to her!

AUGUSTINE. Is that the bee that steals away
my honey?

Thou who dost live with me a poem of love
Jealous of empty words? Why, dearest heart,
That ode had been Astronomy to thee!

MELCARA. Yet those unlearnèd in Astronomy
May gaze with joy upon the stars. So I
Had loved the words thou wrotest because thou
wrotest them.

O dear my lord! thou who dost teach so many
Wilt thou not teach me more, that I having learned
Thou mayest more love me?

AUGUSTINE. Dear, thou teachest me.
Nay, I'm in earnest . . . Look not sorrowful.

To think that underneath this golden web,—

[*Lifting a length of her hair musingly, and
caressing it while he speaks.*]

Which I did only deem the snare of love,—

Thoughts buzzed and stung. Tell me, my little one,
Who art so innocent wise, what god dost pray to?

MELCARA. Oh how I've longed that thou
should'st show me God!

AUGUSTINE. [*Bitterly*] How should I show thee
that I have not found?

But every woman hath some whispering god
Who tells her secrets. Share thine with me, sweet.

MELCARA. If thou didst laugh at this, I could
not bear it.

AUGUSTINE. Laughter hath never entered in
my heart.

That is thy dwelling place. Tell on; fear not.

MELCARA. [*Gazing before her vaguely*] I know
not how to tell it, 'tis like dreams—

So fair in dreaming, drest in words so poor.

... 'Tis something that without me yet within,—

Whene'er I anguish o'er the riddle of things

And would, and would not, craving I know not what,
Breathes soft "*I know . . . I know*" . . .

'Tis like a wind that kindleth fire to flame,
And lo ! I am that flame and it the wind ;
And when I overleap this present joy
And tremble in a future bare of love,
There hath it fled before me, and with wings
As of a tender darkness folds me round
And blends me with the night. Or sad, or glad,
Ever it whispereth "*I know . . . I know . . .*"

AUGUSTINE. Now hides not any deepest-hearted
flower

More beauty than a woman ! Tell me more.

MELCARA. [*Still lost in her vague thoughts*]

I never saw my mother : but one there was,
My nurse, long dead now, who in golden words
Taught me of that fair Carthaginian god
Who had no temple but the hearts of men,—
Melcarth the Beautiful, who loved not blood.
And me she named in honour of his name,
Praying his grace on me for that name's sake.

Here, as I said, he had no temple, but one

To think that underneath this golden web,—

[*Lifting a length of her hair musingly, and
caressing it while he speaks.*]

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Praying his grace on me for that name's sake.

Here, as I said, he had no temple, but one

In far-off Tyre he had,—Magnificent,
Wrought by the gods to singing of the stars,—
But never image had he, there or here.
Only two pillars there were that stayed his house—
One of pure gold, one like to emerald,
That shone at night as with a soul of fire.

Sometimes my dreams are lighted with that glow,
And through the splendour of mine own spirit I
walk,

One with the god . . . I know not how to tell it . . .
But oftener there doth rise and ebb in me
A fountain of ineffable delight,
Whose waters may not see the glare of day,
Whose source lies hid in dreams, and with the tide
Of life doth flow inversely,—like that spring
Which welling forth at Gades in his temple
Inversely with the sea-tide rose and fell.

. . . To this god I have prayed for thee, beloved.

AUGUSTINE. And thou didst long for me to
show thee God!

Thou hast but opened thy heart, and I have seen
Him.

ANTONIUS *enters by a door opening on the
outer chamber.*

MELCARA. [*Hastily withdrawing herself from
AUGUSTINE'S arms*] There . . . there's a friend.
I'll forth into the garden.

[*To ANTONIUS*] Good-day . . . good-leave, sir, my
little son awaits me.

[*She slips out quickly, and they hear her
calling, "ADEODATUS! ADEODATUS!"*]

AUGUSTINE. Antonius, man, thou fittest in my
mood

Like hand in hand. Welcome and welcome!

ANTONIUS. Hail!

Our diademed poet . . . What a victory!

All Carthage buzzes with it like a hive.

And what a poem!

AUGUSTINE. Ay, and what a poem!

Poor Virgil dipped in honey-dew and wrung out
Into a thimble. Shame me not, Antonius.

ANTONIUS. Shame thee? Is the man mad,
ye Muses?

AUGUSTINE.

Nay,

I would I had been when I writ the rubbish.

Madness hath strength, they say . . . But truce,
my friend.

Augustine, not his poem, would claim thy mind.

I am on the rack, Antonius.

ANTONIUS.

What is it now?

AUGUSTINE. What has it ever been? Myself,
myself.

Myself . . . I have seen Faustus . . . talked with him.

ANTONIUS. Ah! So thou hast seen Faustus!
When?

AUGUSTINE.

For three days

We have conversed together.

ANTONIUS.

And thou find'st him——?

AUGUSTINE. As empty as the trumpet a child
destroys

To find its music.

ANTONIUS.

What! the arch Manichee?

Him you have waited for so long? Great Faustus?

AUGUSTINE. Faustus the man, I like. He is
simple, kind;

He hath a heart in his breast, and will not feign
A knowledge which he hath not. But as teacher ! . . .
As learned Bishop ! . . . Why, this learning, look you,
Some Aristotle, a little Cicero,
A very little Seneca . . . Like babes
These great ones in their compressed images
Toddled into his talk and out again
With nursery lisplings . . . Then the mighty answers
He was to give my questions ! . . . Why, Antonius,
I doubt he had ever asked them of himself.
Thus I found Faustus and lost him.

*[He falls to walking up and down with
excited moodiness.]*

ANTONIUS. But thyself . . .
Thou hast not lost thyself with Faustus, man.
Cheerly ! . . . Thou'rt ever ready to drop to Hell
When thou hast failed in scaling Heaven.

AUGUSTINE. In truth,
I have never found myself to lose myself,
Nor am I sure there is a Heaven to scale.

ANTONIUS. Rightly thou sayest thou hast not
found thyself,

For when a man dives deep within himself
And rises with that chief pearl of his being,—
Resolve unto the highest,—he is King
Of more than his sole self, and sun and moon
Fight for him in their courses. So with Heaven . . .
For since that possible god, man, is, God must be ;
And he who finds himself finds God.

AUGUSTINE. Say rather,
That he who finds God finds himself. Thou
knowest not

Such counter-currents as my turbulent being.
Thou art a staid believer . . . A quiet Christian,
Whose man-made God moves orderly when priests,
Bishops, and Archbishops do thumb the strings,
And answering prompt the cue of holy Church,
Appears, divinely punctual, when summoned.
. . . Antonius ! forgive me ! I am a madman
Who strike my friend in striking at myself.
Forgive me !

ANTONIUS. O Augustine, thou must know
I am not such a friend as takes offence
When one in fever rails at him. My heart

Is more thine own than mine when thou dost
need it.

AUGUSTINE. [*Wildly, starting as from a trance*]
Hast thou e'er thought on silence, how dread it is?
The implacable silence that answereth man's
clamour

And keepeth deity inviolate?

There have been moments when I could have knelt
In frenzied adoration of dumb space,

So more majestic it seemed to me

Than any thundering of any god.

Yet, Lord God! how I have cringed and howled
for answers!

Blasphemed and prayed, and turning rent myself

That haply I might rend Thee dwelling in me,

So Thou mightest speak to me if but to curse me!

[*He pauses, walking back and forth and
muttering to himself. Then speaks sud-
denly again.*]

Then have come other moods, and I have thought

That not within the flesh dwelt all our being;

That we had other means than of the senses

And their accustomed uses by which to know
To apprehend the invisible. Might, as 'twere,
See with our ears, hear with our eyes, and know
Beyond the brain . . . Oh ! madness breathes upon
me !

Heed me not, dear Antonius. Patience, patience . . .

*[He continues to walk back and forth,
while ANTONIUS watches him in anx-
ious, affectionate silence. AUGUSTINE
suddenly stops before him and smiles,
speaking in a gentle voice.]*

“Melcarth the Beautiful, who loves not blood.”

Heard you a lovelier music in your life
To sing a lovelier theme ? A young god's likeness,
Limned by an angel on the sky of dawn.
Such is her god, Melcara's . . . named for him.
And her god speaks to her in tenderest wise,
Saying, “I know . . . I know . . .”

[He breaks off suddenly, growing excited again.]

She, innocent heart,
Contents her with a god that saith “I know.”
But I would be that god ! I—I would know !

For why, then, should one consciousness be Augustine !

And yet another consciousness be God ?

Where then is justice ?—

ANTONIUS. Thou sinnest against thyself
With these mad ravings, dear Augustine. Peace,
'Til reason come again.

AUGUSTINE. O thou calm soul !
What dost thou know of sin ? . . . I—I, Augustine,
Who am his dear familiar, will instruct thee
That so thou mayest avoid him evermore.
I have not contented me with obvious vice,
For I have made me gorgeous thoughts to sin with,
And used the angels of my mind as harlots !
Man, man, thou hast not sinned with thy chief
essence,
But with some little, outer part of thee.
Thou knowest sins, not sin.

ANTONIUS. Hear me, Augustine . . .

AUGUSTINE. [*Paying no heed to him*] Thou hast
not thought thyself kinsman to God,
Yet stooped thy high estate to cherish demons.

Thou hast not thought the fire divine burned in
thee

And used it but to light the torch of lust.

Thou hast not cried "Truth! Truth!" and lived
but lies.

Thou hast not searched the universe for God,
And found thine own dire self was god to thee!

Oh! that a man could burst this prison of self
And wake in other worlds another being!

Were I, Augustine, from Augustine free,
I yet might conquer God and serve Him too!—

ANTONIUS. O my Augustine, hear me! These
very throes

Proclaim the good in thee that strives with ill.

Thou wilt yet serve God, but He will conquer thee;
With love victorious Christ will vanquish thee,

And show thee that to serve Him is to reign.

AUGUSTINE. The lovely sovereignty of that
fair Name

Hath ever swayed the nobler man in me;—

That Name thou last didst utter,—Name of gold
And ivory, of stars and lightnings wrought.

Tender as flowers and terrible as a fire
Consuming idols. And yet... And yet, Antonius...
—(Oh! I'll divulge to thee my secretest self!
Thou shalt love me as I am, or not at all)—
... And yet, Antonius, while my heart acclaims Him,
My reason questions. I were not Augustine
Were pride in intellect set underfoot,
For surely God is Mind as well as Love.
Wherefore then came He only to the humble,
The poor in mind? Wherefore these fishermen?
Were not great Cæsar humbled, and through love,
A mightier work than humble men uplifted
Until they wrangled for high place in Heaven?
And why should God-as-Man scorn intellect?
Oh! had Christ lived in Greece and talked with
Plato!

There were a miracle worthy of His Godhead.
All love and knowledge blent to feed the ages!—

ANTONIUS. How shall I answer thee? I am
not eloquent.

The cohorts of thy splendid, trampling words
Beat all the mind to dust and cloud the vision.

But there's a voice in me that saith not reason
Shall bring a man home to the heart of being,
That he who knows and knoweth not how he knows
That man hath knowledge. Such an one am I,
For though I cannot link it out in words
Of gold and silver, I have that within
Which couldst thou feel but once thyself wouldst
know

To be the truth of truths. But thou must feel it.
Its logic is the mighty logic of fire
Which doth convince by burning. In my breast
Glow such a spark of wisdom,—call it faith
If that doth better like thee,—and the years,
I acquiescing in the law of fire,
May fan it into light.

AUGUSTINE. Not so with me.

I hold if love descends with God to man,
The intellect ascends with man to God ;
And, like Prometheus in the ancient fable,
Had rather boldly filch my fire from Heaven,
Knowing its source, than in the dark to feel
An unknown flame that feeds upon my reason,

Leaving me naught save feeling as a witness.

ANTONIUS. Yet, O my friend, if thou so longest
for knowledge,

Were not all means acceptable? What then,
If sheer humility could show thee God,
Couldst thou not strive against this pride of thine?
It is what we will to will, not what we will,
That makes us what we are. Strive with thy pride,
Or one day it will lay thee in the dust.

AUGUSTINE. I have thought on that, Antonius,—
often felt

The future like a sword-point at my breast,
And wondered whether courage would be mine
To advance upon it. What sorrows wait for me?
What shames? What trials? And shall I wither
or grow?

ANTONIUS. [*Smiling sadly*] Thou'lt ripen with
tears like Barbary figs with rain.

Ne'er doubt it, my Augustine. It were strange
If thou, who longest to solve all mysteries,
Shouldst shirk this uttermost mystery of all.
Sorrow's Initiates know the word of words

Which doth unlock the kingdom of the Soul.

AUGUSTINE. Ay, what if Sorrow doth reveal to
man

That God hath wept? That when He did repent
Him

Of making man, the cause of His repentance

Was the so awful woes of helpless beings

Himself had ordered unto suffering?

That His immaculate justice did ordain

Himself should become man and suffer manhood:

That only thus could He undo His deed

And expiate Creation on the Cross?

'Tis a wild thought that doth appeal to me.

ANTONIUS. Whence camest thou? How art
thou Monica's son

And speakest such words?

AUGUSTINE. Whence came I? Now, Antonius,
I have put that question to myself ere this.

Did infancy succeed some other age,

And what before that life again? Where was I?

Or was I anyone, as now we think

Of being and its attributes? Nay, truly

The dignity of the soul forbids the thought
That it was fashioned some few years ago,
As men mould statues. Let us once admit it,
And what a blasphemous vision darkens light !
Man has but to sin, and lo ! God makes a soul !
We the created create ere the Creator,
And this Omnipotent Being out-sits eternity,
Breathing forth souls as children breathe forth
bubbles

At man's behest ! No ! 'Tis unthinkable.

ANTONIUS. I do not give my pass-word to such
thoughts.

My mind's the fortress that doth guard my soul,
And so I bar them out. You Manichees
Do drench your wits in questionings as in wine
And stumble drunkenly to no conclusion,
Sticking in doubt as in some viscous mud.
I have heard thee like a madman rave on evil,
And whence, and how, and where, and when it was.
We Christians are content if we avoid it.

AUGUSTINE. Oh ! I am no Manichæan from this
day !

That fruit bred devils in me : not an angel !
Not one, my good Antonius, lest a voice
That in mine ears cries ever "Truth ! Truth !
Truth !"

Be such an one. Yet after many searchings
I sometimes think that evil is the darkness
On which God paints with light His Masterpiece,
Of Man fulfilled to His ideal of man :
That God at first did choose for man as man
Had chosen for himself had he been God,
Despite of evil. That Satan is more than Satan,
In that he is also God's ; even as darkness
Was His before He said "Let there be light !"

ANTONIUS. Oh that He would this Darkness
called Augustine
Kindle to light ! Thou art disorder's crown,—
Thy mind a vast chaotic universe,
Where sun and moon and stars sweep from their
orbits
And mix in dazzling ruin ! Thou hast all gifts
Save that of being simple.

AUGUSTINE.

'Tis my ideas

That trouble thine. The onward-rushing mind
Creates a wind of thought wherein the flames
Of other men's beliefs are blown and shaken,
Not the fixed stars of Intellect's clear heaven.
Say that these fantasies disturb the still
And lucent waters of thy stored opinion
As were a flight of strangely painted birds
To skim across the surface of a pool
Shut in a silver vessel. Thou yet mightest learn
Of the unusual some usual fact,
That, thus observed, would yield the hidden
 meaning
Shut otherwise within its symbol, as man
Is shut within the symbol of his body.
A mighty teacher is Phantasy, believe me.
For she instructs the ever watchful mind
As children should be learned, by charms and spells
That lure the delicate sprite Inquisitiveness,
And poise her quivering on her gauzy wings
Until the rainbow seems to chaunt in colour
Of harmony that dwells in all things fair.
No later than this morning did the glass

Wherein Melcara looks to weave her hair
Speak to me in the language of the sun,
And hint at heavenly mysteries. There it lay,—
The sun for heart within its crystal breast,—
And cast a lovely emblem overhead,
Wherein the orb reflected, seemed the flame
That glows within the centre of our being ;
While far above it curved a lovely arc
Of iris light, symbolic of the thoughts
That seem our own, our crown of consciousness
Yet re-create us in their very image.

ANTONIUS. Thou speakest there one of those
deeper truths
That other men will sometimes comprehend
Even better than the man who uttered it.
It is because his thoughts create the man
That I do fear thy thoughts for thee, Augustine.

Thy mind is like a mirror swung in space,
And whirling on a thread. Now it reflecteth
The heavens, and now the earth. Now doth the
lightning
Write hieroglyphs upon it, and anon

Some deep-sea monster glooms it with his bulk.
Oh, repossess thyself of thy great mind,
And hold it fixed on deity!

AUGUSTINE. Thy thought
Hath made a Christian of thee, so thy mind
Is stayed on Christ ; but I am yet a shadow
That changes with the changing of the light,
And hath no stable outline. I am weary
With seeking God as mariners, oft shipwrecked,
Are weary of the sea, yet cannot long
Abide beyond the terror of its voice.

Oh, I adventured for no golden fleece
Of rare philosophy to keep me warm,
But on that doom-resounding outer deep,
Whose waters are compact of living souls
Once valiant as mine own, I flung abroad
The bright sail of my thought and cast adrift
The buoy of measured faith. Now will I rest me,
And think on lovely things within the ken
Of all whom beauty can console for all.

ANTONIUS. Hast thou read Plato, and canst
argue thus?

Even the Manichees teach that all things visible
Have each its spirit. Wilt thou feed thy mind
Upon the outer husk of hidden beauty?

AUGUSTINE. Because I cannot see this mind of
mine,

Shall I deny my eyes their meed of beauty?
Do we love anything but the beautiful?
What is it that draws us to the things we love?
Shall ugliness in Nature then entrance us
Because some hidden part of it is fair?
The outer beauty we possess; the inner
Men do but guess at as they guess at God.
Nay, were that very Christ thou dost adore
To walk among us clothed again in flesh,
Should we not bow in worship of His beauty
Though He spake ne'er a word? For something
potent

Tells me that He was lovelier in form
Than all the sons of man since Eden fell.
What though they tell us he was marred by sorrow?
There are who see more grace in Sorrow's fading
Than in the brightest painting of mere Joy,

And for each beauty that Grief steals away
She brings a fairer,—jewels eyes with tears,
And fans the red fire of the cheek to white.

How all men dwell upon the Sorrow of Christ!
Hath none bethought him what an awful joy
Must have inhabited the breast where throbbed
The heart that was to shed itself like wine
For man's refreshment?—O Antonius!
Could I but solve myself and conquer doubt,
Not such a lover in all the world He died for
Would Christ accept as in this same Augustine!

ANTONIUS. And this is he who talks of visible
beauty
As of a thing sufficient in itself! . . .

AUGUSTINE. Soft, soft, my friend! There was
an 'if' stood guard
Between me and my saying as big as that
Which severs good from ill. I tell thee, man,
I am weary of my endless quest.
Let God seek me from henceforth. I am spent.

ANTONIUS. Alas, Augustine! Some day thy
proud soul

Will, like a beggar, crave what now it scorns.

AUGUSTINE. Now bear thee like a King, O
thou my soul,

And I will build thee palaces of thought

And bring thee beauty to thy bride and Queen :

Thou shalt clothe thee in the Tyrian of the sea,

And crown thee with the golden rings of Saturn

As with a triple diadem. Bright youth

Shall be thy sceptre, Music all thy law ;

On hearts of poets thou shalt take thy state.

The winds shall be thy harpers, stars thy gems ;

When thou wouldst cherish folly,—Love thy fool.

I will descend to Hades, and bring back

All fairest women that have lived and loved

To wait upon thee. Thou shalt take thy pleasure

Where gods have taken theirs, and thy regalia

Be wrought from the insignia of all gods.

And brighter uses shalt thou find for them,—

With the caduceus drive refulgent day-dreams,

And with Astarte's cestus girdle Fate.

Even sins that are not lovely thou shalt banish,

And all thy crimes be exquisite as angels,

Thine archetype some fair, perverted rose
That flowers green while all its leaves are red !

ANTONIUS. O thou who hast so oft wept Dido
slain,

How canst thou thus destroy thyself, and weep
not ?

But thou art like a man who, bent on war,
Doth rush into the middle of the fight
Only to tread upon a snake, and die
Not by the enemy's sword, but his own act.

Yet as I love thee better than thyself
Canst love thyself, I also know thee better.

This mood will pass. Not so Antonius.

Thou'lt always find him when thou needest him.
Until that time farewell, and peace come to thee.

AUGUSTINE. Farewell, Antonius. I do count
on thee

As on . . . As on Antonius ! All is said.

Farewell for this time.

II

AUGUSTINE IN MILAN

II

AUGUSTINE IN MILAN

SCENE.—*An antechamber looking upon a garden.*

ALYPIUS is seated with the book he has been reading closed upon his finger, and gazes anxiously at AUGUSTINE who sits near him, sunk in a trance-like gloom. PONTITIANUS has just left them.

ALYPIUS. Thus hath he sate since Pontitianus left us.

His sight bent inward ; all his body listening
As to some voice that speaks within his soul.
I fear for him : so violent are his passions,
That even toward God he moves as in a whirlwind.
What new assault is here ? What darkling battle
Now wagheth he against himself ? . . . Augustine !
What eyes he turns on me ! Hath he seen God ?

Or Satan? . . . Dear Augustine, speak! . . .
Augustine!

AUGUSTINE. [*Starting suddenly to his feet, wild-eyed and altered*] What aileth us? What is it?
What heardest thou?

The ignorant rise up, take heaven by storm,
Cry "Peace!" and lo! she cometh at their call!
While we, with learning yet without a heart,
Lo! where we crouch submissive, bound like slaves,
In the prison of the flesh . . . Are we ashamed
To follow where we may not lead, nor shamed
By this same shame which doth not let us follow?
Oh, I am come to that high place in life
Wherefrom if headlong I cast not my pride,
My pride will hurl down me to deathless darkness!
I am a divided kingdom . . . Or I conquer,
Or fall amidst the ruins of myself!

[*He rushes out like a madman.*]

ALYPIUS. O thou great soul, how greatly art
thou tortured!

Yet in the very largeness of thy woe
I see the promise of a larger joy.

I will follow him . . . but presently, . . . not now.
A man should keep a compact with himself,
Nor strip himself quite bare save unto God ;
And in this stress he might too much divulge
Even unto me, who love him next to God.
But I can pray for thee, O my Augustine.
Now be my prayers his guardian angels, Lord !

*[He rests the book upon the table by which
they had been sitting, and bows his head
upon it.]*

SCENE II.—*A garden.* AUGUSTINE *enters like
one fleeing from himself.*

AUGUSTINE. Where shall I hide me from myself,
O God ?

Where'er I turn, there do I see before me
My hideous soul, until I cry for blindness
As babes for sleep. Thus, thus might Satan peer
Into some lake of fire, and there beholding
His so-aborrent image, smite all Hell

To darkness, lest in terror of himself
He might destroy himself, and so serve God.

Lo ! how I babble like the babes I spake of.
Each man is Satan, and within him Hell !
O thou abysmal depth wherein I gaze,
Thou art myself, and with this self I digged thee !
Out of thee digged the gold that was my virtue,
The precious jewels of my intellect,
To cast them unto swine ! Now there is left me
Naught but this dark, immeasurable void,
Where once shone all the treasures of the soul !

* * * * *

Lord God ! I would not hide myself from Thee.
Only from mine own eyes let me be hidden !
I cannot bear the sight . . . Lord God ! have
mercy ! . . .

. . . Yet I must bear it—yea, and worse, for now
Doth come my child-self, and with piteous eyes
Gazes upon me, saying with piteous voice :
“Lo ! now, Augustine, what hast thou done to me,
Whose angel did behold the face of God ?

With what dark visions hast thou brimmed those
eyes,

Once filled with Deity? How fouled with soot
From lust's black flame that once so whitest soul?
O thou who once wast I, how hast thou used me?
I am thyself's own ghost, and will forever
Haunt thee, thou murderer of Innocence!"

Now woe to thee, most miserable Augustine!
For thou didst strangle Purity, and now
When she might save thee, she is but a corpse!
Oh, is not this the utmost pang of sin,
To know thyself destroyed by thine own act!

* * * * *

Lo! on a sudden how the void boils o'er
With scarlet mists that wreathe and cling about me.
They are the phantoms of my delicate vices.
Red-ghosts of sins long dead . . . Oh, ye are realer
Than flesh and blood to others! I am your maker;
Ye have my life in ye, abominable
And beauteous as ye are! Oh, I have sinned
With the vermilion paintings on the wall

Of mine imagination, like Aholibah,
And now they rise and hail me their creator,
And offer me their sweet and venomous worship—
Poisonous, yet fair as Marsh-flowers of Tagaste.

* * * * *

I am blown like flame upon a wind of loves
Unspeakable . . . The shrilling of the voice
Of all desire thrills through my spirit's ear
Unto the quick of being . . . Sin, thou art fair
Above all daughters of the sons of Bel!
Who sayest that thou art vile to look upon
Hath never seen thee . . . When thou comest thus
Clothed on with fire of thought and shod with
music
Of pleasant memories, thou art Sin indeed,
And, with a different beauty, fair as Seraphs!

* * * * *

Now change the shapes ; like wingèd serpents they
dart
And gleam about me, still abhorredly lovely.

But now—now—now they shed their glancing wings,
They dim—they fall—about my feet they knot
And writhe on viscid bellies—I am man !
Shall not my heel be set upon their heads?—
Oh, I am but a man ! Their venom slays me,
Or worser, slays my will ! O God ! God ! God !
Shall I command my hand, my foot, my body,
And they obey me, and my mind rebel ?
I will that all my will shall bow to Thine,
Yet doth that will rise up like Satan armoured,
Saying, “ O thou who hast served but me till now,
Thou shalt not bow to any god but me ! ”
Now comest thou in thy true likeness, Sin !
Who saith thou art not hideous ne’er hath served
thee !

Oh, that to part with thee should be more bitter
Than ’twere to part with life ! Yet we die not.
Our bodies die ; we ’scape not from ourselves
Though through a thousand bodies we should flee
And bodiless whirl at last through countless Aeons !
In transformation lies our only hope.
How shall I change this horrible self of mine ?

How re-beget myself? By what huge striving
Die into life? Yet these my very throes
Acquaint me of some imminent destiny
Wherein I still shall know that I am I
Yet other. Thus might that which was to be
Adam, have felt the kneading of its clay
Ere yet the living soul was breathed upon it.

* * * * *

Again they rise about me—lull my spirit
As with the magic perfumes of the Spring,
And weight mine eyelids with forbidden beauty ;
And one voice crieth as though a falling star
Did sing of Heaven lost : “ Wilt thou no more,
No more forever share delight with me ?
Nor with the delicate wine of double joy
Enchant thy body ? Thou art young, Augustine,
Oh, thou art young to say ‘no more’ to pleasure ! ” . . .
But hark ! Another voice, as though Earth, Air,
Fire and the deeps of Ocean clarioned forth :
“ Thou fool ! The body wherein thou dost dwell
Is not a pleasure-house, but Deity’s temple ! ”

Descend ! Descend, Lord Christ ! and cleanse Thy
temple ;

Cast out these barterers of lust, my passions,
Yea, even the doves of earthly tenderness
Take hence, and send the pure dove of Thy Spirit
To brood alone o'er this tumultuous heart !

O Truth of Truth, pierce to the quick of my soul
As with a glaive of light. Sunder my darkness,
Divide me from myself and in the void
Where that dark self did dwell, shine Thou and
burn,

O Light of very light, most holiest fire,
Consuming even the shadow of my sins,
Those memories of evil, unto which
Though I consent not, yet they do compel me,
Saying, " Thou lovedst me once, and me ! and me !
Thou shalt not now forget us ! " . . . O Lord Christ,
Come seek me in the dark land where I dwell
Far from Thee in the region of Unlikeness,
And let my homing soul find rest in Thee !
Lord, I will drink from any cup of anguish
That thou mayest offer me, but O my God !

Grant that this cup which I myself have brimmed
With loathliness, pass from me! . . .

[*He flings himself face down on the grass in agony.*]

A VOICE.

Tolle . . . lege!

Tolle . . . lege!

AUGUSTINE. [*Whispering*] What voice was that?

. . . A child's?

The spirit of a child's? . . . Too exquisite frail

Its lovely crystal to ring forth from flesh . . .

My God! . . . keep madness from me . . .

THE VOICE.

Tolle . . . lege!

AUGUSTINE. Again! . . . I heard it with these
ears of flesh,

Yet not of earth that sound . . . What meaning
hath it?

Is it a voice from Heaven? . . . Am I commanded?

THE VOICE. *Tolle . . . lege! Tolle . . . lege!*

Tolle . . . lege!

AUGUSTINE. "Take . . . read," it saith . . . What
must I take and read?

What book? Enlighten me, O Christ my Lord,

If this Voice come from Thee! . . .

[He kneels in silence for a moment, covering his face with his hands. Then suddenly starts up.]

The Scripture of Paul! . . .

The volume I was reading in this noon!

I do recall now how Saint Anthony

Was thus converted, hearing what was read,

By chance as spoken to him . . . What then if I,

Even I, Augustine, should be thus enlightened,

Opening that holy book and reading there,

As writ for me, what first my eye doth light on?

Lord! Lord! Dost thou command me?

THE VOICE.

Tolle . . . lege!

[AUGUSTINE rushes to the place where he had left the volume of Scripture, and taking it into his trembling hands, pauses a moment, looking up in desperate appeal.]

AUGUSTINE. O Christ, thou Lover of Souls, guide
now my soul!

[He opens the book and reads slowly in a low voice.]

“Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chamber-

ing and wantonness, not in strife and envying: but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof."

[He kisses the words with passionate ecstasy, then cries out with a great sob . . .

My God! My God! I thank Thee! . . . Thou hast shined

Within my heart, and all my night is day!

SCENE II.—*A chamber in the house in Milan.*

Day is breaking. Through the open windows can be seen the fogs rising and the immensity of the Lombard sky. A small bronze lamp with double-neck burns on a table by which MONICA is kneeling before a leaden crucifix, which she holds in both hands, her elbows supported on the table. On a low pallet lies MELCARA, covered with a large cloak. She moves restlessly now and then, and mutters in her sleep.

MONICA. Lord, must it ever be that when Thou answerest

The prayer of one, another's heart is broken?
Lord, Lord! I have but done my duty, and yet
The mother's heart in me bleeds for this mother.
Oh comfort her! Oh turn her heart to Thee!
That wild and passionate heart which only pants
For human happiness . . . Console her, Lord.
Teach her to see Thy love in lovelessness,
To find her will in Thine . . . her all in Thee!

MELCARA. [*Tossing and murmuring in her sleep*]
No! No! . . . the red flowers, not the white . . .

He loves them

Wound thus along my hair . . . Give me the
poppies . . .

MONICA. Poor girl! The poppy-drink that I
did mix her
Brings dreams as well as sleep . . . How long it
was
Ere she would take it! . . . But else she had gone
mad. . . .

'Tis piteous . . . piteous . . .

MELCARA. There! . . . My mirror now . . .
The little ivory one with bells around it.

He wrote a poem on it once. . . . How went it?

[She sits up, staring about her with unseeing eyes.

MONICA. Lie down, poor child. . . . Calm thee. . . . Lie down again. . . .

MELCARA. I know it, I tell thee. . . . Thou shalt hear me say it.

Think you I would forget his words? . . . *his* words?

Be quiet, and I will say it to thee. . . . So . . .

“Melcara’s conscience thou, fair glass!

. . . When ordered are those golden threads

That bind my heart, and in thy depth

She sees no blur that beauty dreads.

Content as any flower is she,

And cries ‘All’s well . . . all’s well with me!’”

It hath been much commended. . . . Dost thou like it?

Now I will sleep a little ere he comes.

I am very tired . . . but wake me when he comes.

[She sinks back, still muttering to herself.

As she does so, AUGUSTINE appears in the doorway ghastly pale, his eyes red

*with weeping. He comes softly over
beside his mother, and whispers hoarsely.*

AUGUSTINE. . . . They have come for her . . .
those who're to journey with her. . . .

MONICA. My dear, dear son! . . .

AUGUSTINE. [*With a wild burst*] Oh! say no
word to me! . . .

. . . Even thou, my mother, say no word to me!

[*At the sound of his voice MELCARA
starts up again.*

MELCARA. My lord, if the boy coughs, give him
this syrup. . . .

My old nurse mixed it for him long ago,

When he was but a baby . . .

[*She fumbles in the folds of her dress
Nay, I had it . . .*

I had it here. . . .

[*Suddenly she wakes fully, and getting
to her feet rushes and flings herself
upon his breast.*

My lord! my lord! Thou art come. . . .

Oh I have had a dream so horrible

Thou'lt not believe it! . . . Feel how wet my hair is. . . .

Comfort me . . . kiss me . . . tell me thou lovest me. . . .

[AUGUSTINE *holds her in silence, trembling.*

As he does not speak she draws back in his arms, and putting her hands against his breast gazes up into his face.

MELCARA. [*Whispering*] Thou dost not say a word . . . Thou art weeping . . . Why?

Why art thou weeping? . . . Augustine! Speak to me!

. . . Wilt thou not say one word? . . . Oh who has been here?

. . . What have they done to thee? . . . Am I still dreaming? [*She turns her head wildly, and sees MONICA standing by the table.*

What! She . . . *she* . . . *here*? O God! then I'm awake! . . .

Awake for all my life to horror and woe!

I recollect it all now . . . all . . . all . . . all . . .

[*Piteously to MONICA.*

Oh, wilt thou not this little one last time
Leave us together, lady? Thy God will bless thee.
He who was kind to Magdalen will bless thee
For being kind to me . . . Wilt thou not leave us?

MONICA. O child, if thou wouldst only turn to
Him,

Thou'dst find thy joy in Him, like Magdalen!

MELCARA. [*Softly*] Nay, lady . . . She repented
of her sin,

And since my sin's the love I bear my lord,
How then shall I repent, who must forever
Love him? . . . My sin is all that you have left me.
Your God can take my life, but not my love.
Wilt thou not leave us?

MONICA. [*Going out sadly*] Christ have mercy
on thee!

[*As she goes out, MELCARA turns to
AUGUSTINE and gently, almost timidly,
puts her hand on his arm, as he stands
with his face hidden from her.*

MELCARA. See, dear my lord, . . . be not afraid
of me.

Look up, and see how quiet I am and gentle . . .
Wilt thou not say some last kind words to me,
That I can make my prayers through all the
years?

AUGUSTINE. Melcara! O Melcara!

MELCARA. Why, there, dear lord . . .
To hear thee say my name with so much anguish
Gives me a sorrowful joy I would not part with
For all the gladness of the whole glad world.
For oh! thou lovedst me once! . . .

AUGUSTINE. I love thee now! . . .
Canst thou not see when souls are crucified,
Because they have not blood as bodies have?

MELCARA. Oh that I could bear everything for
thee!
Belovèd! Belovèd! Yet no . . . didst thou not
suffer
Thou ne'er hadst loved me.

[She changes suddenly, crying out wildly.

I am glad thou sufferest! . . .
I am glad . . . glad . . . glad! . . . Dost hear,
Augustine? . . . Glad! . . .

... No, no! ... I did not mean it ... I am calm again.

But let me hear thy voice ... Speak thou to me! ...

AUGUSTINE. I cannot! I cannot! ...

[MELCARA *gazes sadly out of the window for some moments, then begins again very softly.*

MELCARA. What wilt thou tell the boy? He loves me, dear my lord. What wilt thou tell him?

AUGUSTINE. Melcara!

MELCARA. Wilt thou let him think me dead? 'Twere best that way ... And oh! be careful with him.

Watch him thyself ... He is not strong, Augustine ... I have a vial here ... here in my breast ...

[*She finds it, and holds it out to him.*

It is a syrup that I always give him

When he doth cough in winter. Take it now,

And give it to him thyself ...

AUGUSTINE. [*Casting himself down by the table, and catching his head in both hands*] Lord God! I am flesh ...

The time has come to go . . .

Our son . . . our son, Augustine! . . . Where is he, lady?

Oh! bring him quickly! I am dying, I think . . .
 . . . Help me, my lord! . . .

[*She clings blindly to AUGUSTINE, who holds her up.*]

AUGUSTINE. [*Fiercely to his mother*] Why dost thou not speak, mother?

Where is the boy ? . . . Go bring him . . .

MONICA. [*Softly, addressing MELCARA*] He is sleeping . . .

So peacefully . . . He is smiling in his sleep.
Shall I awaken him?

MELCARA. No! no! no! no!

I was mad . . . I had forgotten . . . O lady, thou—
Thou art a mother thyself . . . Let him not know . . .
Oh, this one whiter lie than any truth
That shows his mother's shame, thy God will pardon.

Tell him that I am dead . . . Oh, tell him that !
Let him not know ! . . . My little, only son ! . . .
. . . Come, take me quickly, draw the knife quite out,
So that the life may follow . . .

AUGUSTINE. [*Clasping her passionately to his breast*] Not yet ! . . . Not yet ! . . .

One kiss, though I do lose my soul in it !
Melcara ! My Melcara !

[*A servant appears at the door.*

SERVANT. [*To MONICA*] They who wait
Below stairs, lady, say the hour is past ;
They dare not tarry longer, or the ship
Will sail without them.

MONICA. Say that we come at once.

[*The servant goes out.*

AUGUSTINE. [*Staring stonily down at MELCARA, who has swooned in his arms*] Now have I
tasted death . . . and she is dead

Here on the heart that killed her.

MONICA. She is not dead,
But swooning. So . . . by little and little she
wakes.

Here . . . let me guide her hence while yet she
drowns

In merciful dullness . . . Nay, fear not my son,
I will be tender with her as though she were
My very daughter . . . Oh, that she could have been!

*[She goes out supporting MELCARA. As
they disappear ADEODATUS runs into
the room, looking dazedly about him.]*

ADEODATUS. Where is my mother? . . . I
dreamed that she was dead?

AUGUSTINE. My son, my son! Come to thy
father . . .

ADEODATUS. Nay,

Where is my mother? . . . She is not in her chamber.
I dreamed that she was dead . . .

*[AUGUSTINE tries to soothe him, but he
breaks away, and runs from the room
calling "Mother! Mother!"]*

AUGUSTINE. O Thou who wast in all points
tempted even

As we are, look with pity on Augustine!

Christ! By the lovely hair Thou ne'er didst touch,

By the dear eyes that never mirrored Thine,
By the sweet lips Thou only taughtst to pray,
By the one woman Thou as Man didst love,—
As God didst teach to love but God in Thee,
Have mercy upon her and me! . . . Have mercy!

III

AUGUSTINE AT CASSICIACUM

III

AUGUSTINE AT CASSICIACUM

SCENE.—*The grounds about the Villa Verecundus. It is Springtime. A radiant dawn is over sky and earth. The grass, even of the lawns, is lovely with wild flowers. Great chestnuts grow on every side, above rise the hills, still higher the summits of Monte Rosa. Far below shines Lago Maggiore. Some cypresses jut upward here and there. The Villa is out of sight behind the trees. Sloping down toward the lake are terraced vineyards shining with dew. A mountain stream can be heard rushing downward in a series of cascades, and plunging into a great pool below. AUGUSTINE has just come up from bathing in this pool, and from his early meditation in a sequestered portion of the grounds. He is alone.*

AUGUSTINE. How fair, my God, to walk with
holy thoughts

Where lustral winds lave the bright wings of
Dawn !

How sweeter than all sweetness thus to read
Love, like a word of azure in all the sky,—
The sunlight like a golden Writ of Thine
Emblazoning earth, air, and that fair lake
Gleaming below me like the limpid Soul
Of this most loveliest land, that to its deeps
Hath drawn down heaven, until I seem to stand
Between two heavens, and Thee above, below,
Without me as within, to apprehend.

Oh how all Nature openeth her heart,
Unto the man who hath cast sin from his !
Then doth she seem Thy Messenger whose feet
Are beautiful upon the hills of hope.

For when we clasp some dark, ignoble secret,
Loathing and loving it with sundered heart,
To look upon a flower can bring us shame—
Yea, every grass blade seems to point at us,
Crying with scorn : “ In us thou hast no part !

Holy are we whereon thy feet are set !”

“Away, thou foulness!” Now, dear Lord, how
changed !

My transformation hath transformed the World.

All things as brothers greet me . . . From all
flowers,

All winds, all waters, voices speak to me,

Hail me with love, revealing that on earth

The very silence doth interpret heaven.

Who that hath known it not shall comprehend ?

O never doth a man shut out a sin

From his heart's inmost chamber, but rushes in

Through the still closing door, some Seraph of
light.

. . . I have known pleasure, and delight I have
known,

But never joy till now, for I possess

An immortality wherein to grow

The less Augustine yet the more myself.

There is no death but that which we do bring

Upon ourselves while yet we seem to live.

*

*

*

*

*

But oh, my God ! if language may not tell
The joy of those who do inherit the earth
In purity, what words may tell the rapture
Of that deep region where thoughts wear not
words

Merged in that Word which is Itself all thought
And yet unutterable, that holy vast
Wherein the sun remembered seems as darkness,
And all the being to clothe itself in light—
Nay, to become light, so that when the eyes
Open again on things material
A man doth wonder that his praying hands
Shine not with prayer transfused ? . . . Yet oh ! how
more

Than any prayer, that upward violence
Of the transplendent Soul ablaze with love
And shouting “ Yea ! ” to all Thine ordinance !
Not all the regents of a million stars,
Not they who rule where all the stars are suns,
Not Angels nor Archangels, no, nor Seraphim
Clad in the golden armour of Thy Presence,
Dissolve with such a terrible joy as man

Ascending above man toward Thy Splendour,
Yea, touching but Thy garment's hem of glory!

* * * * *

Yet temper Thou Thy very glory, Lord,
Unto my passionate Soul, lest it exult,
As might a conscious flame, in its own essence,
And humbleness become a holy pride
In being humble . . . For our grosser faults
Being cast aside, temptations more ethereal
Hasten to lure us from our way, and virtues,
Like spiritual wantons, woo us to remain
Rapt in their beauty, when toward Thee we strive
Who art the source of beauty. O my God,
Teach me the secret of simplicity!
Mine be the star-like right of serving Thee
In exquisite silence, who with sounding words
Have sought to serve men and for praise to serve
them.

Or shouldst Thou need my intellect as servant,
Grant that Thy Spirit like a mighty wind
Blow through my mind and kindle it to flame,

Until my radiant thoughts shall mount like Seraphs,
Choirng Thy glory unto heaven and earth.

* * * * *

[ADEODATUS *is seen coming slowly up
from the pool and gazing about him at
the Spring earth.*

AUGUSTINE. [*Seeing him*] How gently dost Thou
deal with me, dear Lord,

Who was so hard to Thee . . . There doth he come
Who was the son of my enchanting sin,
Now of my penitence reborn to me
In Thy pure likeness . . . Yet so frail he is,
His intellect so high above his years,
That fear doth poison love. How fair his face!
As on the far horizon of the plains
The sky doth mingle with the earth, so heaven
And earth are blended in his countenance.
But there is more of heaven . . . Oh mystery,
Supremest mystery of earthly pain,
When thus the Angel of deep, human love
Troubles the pool of tears, and we are glad

That in such wise we can be sorrowful . . .

. . . Adeodatus !

ADEODATUS. [*Running to him*] Oh ! is it thou,
my father ?

I was drawn to thee as though a spirit led me,
For indeed I saw thee not.

AUGUSTINE. [*Laying his hand on his head*] What
wast thou thinking

As thou didst walk so wrapt ?

ADEODATUS. [*Dreamily, a look of his mother
coming over his face*] It came to me

That our most Blessed Lord was once a boy
Even as I am, and that even as I
He loved sweet flowers, and how when He did walk
Through the fair fields of Nazareth, He had felt
The little blossoms tap against His feet
As if to greet Him, even as they did on mine
While I walked toward thee through the dewy grass.

AUGUSTINE. My own Adeodatus ! Well I named
thee !

Thou art doubly mine, since I to Him have given
thee.

But what is this? . . . Thy feet are bare! What folly!

Is this my son? . . . I heard thee cough last night . . .

ADEODATUS. [*Pleadingly*] Alypius walks barefooted in the frost,

And now 'tis warm. Forbid me not, dear father.

AUGUSTINE. Thou art not Alypius, but a delicate boy.

I do forbid thee . . . Dost thou hear, my son?

Take care lest pride entrap thee by such acts.

Thou didst not think of my anxiety,

But how to be the equal of Alypius.

ADEODATUS. [*Kneeling beside AUGUSTINE and throwing his arms about him. As he does so his white woollen robe falls back from his shoulder and discloses the red marks of a scourge*]

Oh, be not angry with me, dearest father!

AUGUSTINE. [*Starting in horror*] And this . . .

this . . . this! . . . Oh, what is this, my son?

What are these cruel marks upon thy flesh?

Oh, thou hast scourged thy father's heart!

ADEODATUS.

But hear me . . .

AUGUSTINE. Thou babe in Christ! What
shouldst thou know of scourges
And scorpions and the bite of hidden fire?
Wilt thou use whips of flame to rule thy manhood
Who thus thy boyish frame dost dare acquaint
With the dark mystery of ecstatic pain?
Thou whose most deadly sin were amply punished
Did thy pet blackbird, plucking from thy lips
Some dainty, draw the blood! . . .

ADEODATUS. My father, hear me! . . .
For Christ's sake, hear me! . . .

AUGUSTINE. Oh! if thou hadst loved me,
Thou hadst not done this violence to thyself!
Thy body now is all too thin a cup
To hold thy spirit's fire, yet thou must use it
As though 'twere adamant . . .

ADEODATUS. Hear me, my father!

AUGUSTINE. Speak, then . . . Say quickly all
thou hast to say.

ADEODATUS. [*Hiding his face in his hands and
whispering*] Last night the nightingales . . .
the nightingales . . .

All night they sang . . . I could not sleep for it.
And something seemed to answer in my heart
And drew me that I followed where they sang,
And listened, praying not, but rapt away
Into a Paradise unknown to Christ,
For I was there alone . . .

AUGUSTINE.

Ah!

ADEODATUS. And anon
Came the young Roman poet through the night,
Singing of mortal love in lovely words
Set to the music of the nightingales . . .
And then . . . oh, then I took the little scourge
I had made me, as a memory of my Lord,
And scourged myself till He remembered me
Who had forgotten Him . . .

AUGUSTINE. [*Catching him in his arm*] And thou
didst well ;
Belovèd, thou didst well ! [*Aside*] Lord Christ !
Who am I
That I should guide an innocent child to Thee?
Lo ! Thou hast set him in our midst that he
Might lead us, we being very humble, Lord,

And I did dare rebuke him! [*To ADEODATUS*]

Weep no more . . .

Thou didst do well. 'Tis past. Think on it no
more,

My little son, my brave Adeodatus.

*[As he is speaking the Young Roman passes
along the road below the vineyard, his
arm about a peasant girl, singing*

[The Poet sings]:

The sea is in love with the inland, and yearns for
her flowers :

O sea, thou hast pearls to thy kiss, but the rose is
the wind's !

Thou hast death to thy call, but King Love, King
of Death, is our King !

ADEODATUS. Father !

AUGUSTINE. All's well, beloved . . . Heed it not.

[The Poet sings]:

O be in mine arms as the dark in the curve of the
moon,

As the moon in the heart of the lake, as the lake
in the hills! . . .

. . As the stars in the flame of the morning, oh,
melt thou in me!

ADEODATUS. O father, let us go! Let us go
quickly! . . .

IV

AUGUSTINE AT TAGASTE

IV

AUGUSTINE AT TAGASTE

SCENE.—*The little chamber that has been set apart for ADEODATUS in the house which AUGUSTINE formerly owned, and in which he now lives with his friends as a monk. The window opens on a scene familiar to his boyhood. It is sunset, and a red glow fills the room. ADEODATUS lies on his bed in one of the unconscious intervals of the fever. About him priests are gathered, administering the last offices. As the ceremony is ended, the friends of AUGUSTINE begin to chant a solemn hymn as they did when MONICA was dying. AUGUSTINE stands a little apart, his face hidden, supported by ALYPIUS. As the priests file slowly from the room, AUGUSTINE whispers brokenly to ALYPIUS.*

AUGUSTINE. I would be alone with him,
Alypius.

They will understand . . . tell them . . . And oh,
my friend !

Even thou . . . even thou . . .

ALYPIUS. Fear nothing, my Augustine.
We will go and pray for him and thee without.

*[He speaks to the others, and softly with
bent heads they leave the chamber.]*

AUGUSTINE. *[Kneeling beside the bed and gazing
upon the boy's unconscious face]* Thou wast
too fair a pearl for me to wear

All sin-grimed as I am . . . O loveliest jewel,
The setting whence thou art taken is my heart,
And bleeds . . . and bleeds . . .

[His sobs interrupt him.]

ADEODATUS. *[Opening his eyes, wild with fever,
and starting up in bed.]* "And I will light a
candle in thy heart . . ."

Who said that? . . . God? . . . Oh, He hath
lighted one

Here in my heart . . . and in my head another . . .

They burn! . . . I am burning up! . . . Lord Christ,
have mercy!

AUGUSTINE. He will, beloved! . . . Oh, He will!
He will!

Hear him, Thou pitiful Saviour . . .

ADEODATUS. Water! . . . water! . . .

AUGUSTINE. [*Giving him water*] Patience,
sweet soul . . . but yet a little while,
And from its source thou shalt drink the living
water . . .

ADEODATUS. Oh, could I sleep a little! . . . I am
so tired. . . .

I am so tired. . . . Hark to the nightingales!
They will not let me sleep . . . the nightingales!
The nightingales! How dark and sweet the
garden!

Dear Lord, where art Thou? O forsake me not!
Leave me not with the nightingales alone!

AUGUSTINE. He will never leave thee nor forsake
thee, dearest.

He is here beside thee . . . close beside thee . . .

ADEODATUS.

Hark!

Is that an angel singing?

... Hear you not?

"Oh, be in mine arms as the dark in the curve of
the moon!"

Oh, no! no! no! ... The scourge ... the scourge
... the scourge! ...

AUGUSTINE. Adeodatus! Oh, my little son,
Awake! Awake! ... These are but evil dreams.
See, I am near thee ... Only I, thy father ...
Oh, say but "Father" once!

ADEODATUS. Mother! O mother!
They told me thou wast dead ... Come to me,
mother! ...

I ne'er believed them. ... 'Twas a sin ... a sin ...
But I could not believe ... Christ will forgive me,
He loved His mother. ...

AUGUSTINE. O my God! my God!
Wilt Thou forsake us both?

ADEODATUS. When He was dying
His mother was beside Him. ...

AUGUSTINE. Lord, have mercy!

ADEODATUS. Wilt thou not come? . . . I know
thou art not dead. . . .

Wilt thou not come, my own, own dearest mother?
There are things that I would tell thee as I used to
When I was little . . . things I cannot tell him,
My father . . . He is a saint . . . He walks with God . . .
'Twould too much grieve him even to hear of sin.
But mothers pardon all before they hear . . .
Oh come, and let me tell thee ere I die!

When thou'st forgiven me, Christ will seem more
near . . .

AUGUSTINE. Adeodatus! Oh, my son, my son!

ADEODATUS. I think if thou wouldst come and
give me water

In thy two hands as when I was a child,
And we played by the fountain—I do think
That then I would not be so thirsty, mother.

AUGUSTINE. My punishment is more than I can
bear . . .

ADEODATUS. [*Turning suddenly to his father*]
Who art thou? . . . Where is my father? . . .
Send him here.

He will know where she is.

AUGUSTINE. [*Groaning aloud in his anguish*] Oh!

ADEODATUS. Go! . . . go quickly!

There is no time to lose . . . Quickly, I say!

AUGUSTINE. Adeodatus! Look upon my face . . .
Give me thy hands . . . look close . . . I—I am thy
father!

ADEODATUS. Art thou? . . . Then do not let
them write it down—

All that I'm saying,—in the books . . . My head,
My head is heavy . . . I would not have these words
Set in the books . . . I have not thought them out . . .

AUGUSTINE. Lord God! Thou dost not break
my heart, but rendest it!

ADEODATUS. [*Mysteriously*] Hush! . . . Listen!
. . . I have just heard a mighty secret.

Bend down thine ear . . . This is God's deepest
secret.

*He saveth even those who are not baptized,
And loveth even those who love Him not . . .*

O I did know I would see my mother again!

[*He dies.*

AUGUSTINE. Adeodatus! Stay yet a little with me! . . .

No breath . . . No motion . . . Wilt thou leave me thus?

Into Thy hands, dear Lord, into Thy hands! . . .

Oh, poor Melcara! How art thou avenged!

Thinking but of myself, I took him from thee,

And he hath left me, thinking but of thee!

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